
Safety alert questions and answers: Heavy Vehicle Certifications by Patrick Chu (Transport & Structure Ltd)

NZ Transport Agency
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PATRICK CHU GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What are the safety concerns related to Patrick Chu (Transport & Structure Ltd)?

Mr Chu is a heavy vehicle specialist certifier who has been found by the NZ Transport Agency to have certified some non-compliant work. Some certifications have been revoked and vehicle owners have been advised to check their vehicles. [Two safety alerts have been issued](#) in relation to Mr Chu's certifications.

What should I do if my vehicle has been certified by Patrick Chu?

Check both of the safety alerts issued in relation to Patrick Chu (Transport & Structure Ltd) and read these questions and answers

One of these, alerts heavy vehicle owners to potential issues with all towing connections or components and advises them to clean and check their vehicle.

The second alert advises that heavy vehicle tow bar connections [including small trucks, tipper trucks, buses, motor homes and goods' vans] certified by Mr Chu have been revoked from 21 December 2018. The vehicle's ability to tow any has been revoked until the tow bar is re-certified.

The [safety alerts are downloadable](#) from the Transport Agency website.

I've had no issues with my vehicle certifications by Patrick Chu / Transport & Structure Ltd. Why do I need to inspect these now?

The Transport Agency has revoked a number of certifications issued by Patrick Chu due to sub-standard work by Mr Chu. The Transport Agency is concerned that further investigation may reveal further deficiencies. While that investigation is ongoing, the Transport Agency has revoked some certifications and taken a precautionary approach with others.

How long has the Transport Agency known about the problems with certifications by Patrick Chu?

The Transport Agency suspended Mr Chu as a Heavy Vehicle Specialist Certifier (HVSC) in October 2018 for specific reasons including certain sub-standard certifications. Since that time, the Transport Agency has continued to investigate certifications by Mr Chu, and as part of that investigation has identified further areas of concern with his work.

Who can I contact at the Transport Agency to discuss this further?

If you would like to discuss this further, we recommend you follow up with an email to info@nzta.govt.nz with Patrick Chu and your vehicle's registration plate number in the subject line.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN RELATION TO SAFETY ALERT: TOW BARS CERTIFIED BY PATRICK CHU (TRANSPORT & STRUCTURE LTD)

What is happening?

Following an ongoing specialist investigation, the NZ Transport Agency has issued a Safety Alert advising that it has revoked the tow bar certifications of around 1500 heavy vehicles. These include small trucks, tipper trucks, buses, motor homes and goods' vans certified by Auckland-based heavy vehicle specialist certifier Patrick Chu of Transport and Structure Limited.

Can I still use my tow bar?

Vehicles can still be used but must not tow anything until the tow bar has been recertified.

How soon do I need to get my tow bar recertified?

We recommend that you have the vehicle's tow bar recertified as soon as possible.

An exemption has been issued by the Transport Agency to allow vehicles with towbar certifications issued by Patrick Chu to continue to be operated with the towbar fitted, so long as the vehicle **is not used** to tow a trailer (or other type of vehicle). The exemption expires on 30 November 2019

If the tow bar is not re-certified before the exemption period ends on 30 November 2019, or the tow bar has not been removed or made inoperable by then, the vehicle will be unable to be used on public roads and will fail its subsequent CoF inspections.

Is my Certificate of Fitness (CoF) still valid?

Your current CoF remains valid. However, you are not permitted to use the vehicle with a revoked towbar certification, to tow a trailer (or other type of vehicle).

Your vehicle won't fail a CoF due to the revoked towbar certification if:

- the towbar has been recertified;
- or the tow bar has been removed or made inoperable,
- or you present the vehicle before 30 November 2019 with its exemption document to the CoF provider.

If the revoked towbar is still fitted and operable, and you have not had it recertified by 30 November 2019, then you will not receive a CoF for your vehicle.

Why has the Transport Agency now decided to pay for recertifications by Patrick Chu?

The Transport Agency has agreed to cover the costs of recertifications and repairs for vehicle owners affected by the revocation of towbars certified by suspended Heavy Vehicle Specialist Certifier Patrick Chu.

Although the Transport Agency isn't legally liable to do so, after reviewing the circumstances of the affected vehicle owners and the impact of the revocation of towbars certified by Mr Chu on associated businesses, we have agreed to cover these costs.

In accepting the offer, vehicle owners will need to "assign their rights" to the Transport Agency to allow the Agency to recoup the money from Chu (or his insurer) on their behalf.

Further information on recertifications can be found in the [regulatory compliance review section of the website](#).

What is the problem with the tow bars?

Mr Chu applied the wrong assessment standard which means the tow bars were incorrectly certified.

This means that during the current period of certification there is a risk that the trailer could detach from the vehicle, even with the safety chains.

I am already on holiday, can I still tow using my trailer home?

No. The Transport Agency is aware this revocation safety alert could come at a difficult time for some vehicle owners. We apologise for this inconvenience, but safety is our top priority.

Will I be contacted by NZTA?

The Transport Agency has been contacting the registered owners of vehicles that had tow bars certified by Mr Chu and is sending letters explaining the exemption notice. Vehicle owners with a tow bar certified by Mr Chu are strongly encouraged to call us on 0800 108 809 if they have not heard from us.

Letters were sent on 24 January.

What do I have to do to make my tow bar safe?

The Transport Agency advises vehicle owners to contact an alternate heavy vehicle certifier to check and re-certify the tow bar to ensure it is safe. A list of alternate certifiers can be found on the [Transport Agency website](#).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN RELATION TO *SAFETY ALERT: HEAVY VEHICLE CERTIFICATIONS BY PATRICK CHU OF TRANSPORT & STRUCTURE LTD*

I have a drawbeam/drawbar on my truck/trailer. What do I need to do?

(i) Identify whether any component of your vehicle has been certified by Patrick Chu

If you have a towing connection certified by Patrick Chu (drawbeam, drawbar) it will be apparent from the plates on the vehicle, as Patrick Chu may be identified by his HVSC initials, ZC. See the example plate photos below.

If you cannot see a plate on your vehicle, or you are otherwise unsure whether a towing connection or chassis component on your vehicle was certified by Patrick Chu, you can find out by calling the Transport Agency contact centre and providing your registration plate number. The contact centre has a list of all certifications issued by Patrick Chu and will be able to tell you whether one relates to your vehicle. Contact the NZ Transport Agency at 0800 108 809.

(ii) Clean and inspect your vehicle

Clean your vehicle and check for signs of cracks or other failures. If any cracks or other failures are present in any towing connections (drawbeam, drawbar) the vehicle should immediately stop being used as a combination vehicle until repaired and recertified by an appropriately qualified HVSC.

If any cracks or failures are apparent in any chassis components, the use of the vehicle should be immediately stopped until the vehicle is repaired and recertified by an appropriately qualified HVSC.

Repeat these checks daily or before each trip: cracks can appear quickly.

(iii) Get your vehicle checked

If any component of your vehicle has been certified by Patrick Chu, we recommend you take it to an appropriate workshop and get it checked. Note that if cracks or failures are present, the vehicle should not be driven to the workshop, save for where the failure concerns a towing connection and the vehicle can be driven directly to the workshop without towing any vehicle.

Note that the Transport Agency will not pay for these checks, nor any work required to get the vehicle to the required standard. The NZ Transport Agency reminds all drivers that it is every vehicle owner's responsibility to ensure their heavy vehicles are up to CoF standard.

Feedback regarding cracks or other failures on any components certified by Patrick Chu, and any other enquiries or questions related to this, should be directed to the Transport Agency on 0800 699 000.

I have a component (e.g. log bolster, fifth wheel, skid plate, crane mount, etc.) certified by Patrick Chu and it has cracks. What should I do?

The Transport Agency recommends that you immediately stop using the vehicle, unless the vehicle can be used without that component (i.e. if the issue is with a drawbeam, use the vehicle but do not tow anything).

The Transport Agency suggests you document the failure, including by way of photographs, and send the photographs together with the vehicle's registration, certification (LT400) number, date of certification, and any other relevant information to info@nzta.govt.nz. Please put Patrick Chu and your registration number in the subject line.

You should then arrange for the component to be repaired/replaced and recertified by an appropriately qualified HVSC.

A list of HVSCs is available on our website. The full list of heavy vehicle certifiers is here: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/heavy-vehicle-specialist-certifiers/docs/heavy-vehicle-specialist-certifiers-list.pdf>.

My vehicle's CoF is about to expire. Will it pass a certificate of fitness (CoF) inspection if it has a drawbeam/drawbar certified by Patrick Chu?

If there are no visual faults, the certification is current, and the vehicle otherwise meets the requirements of a CoF, there is technically nothing to prevent you getting a new CoF. Nonetheless, the Transport Agency recommends that you get the component checked (step three in the safety alert).

I can't locate any damage even though Patrick Chu completed the work. Can I still use my truck and trailer?

Yes, provided your CoF is current, you can still use your truck/trailer. We nonetheless recommend that you follow the three steps in the safety alert.

What if I do nothing?

The Transport Agency highly recommends that you follow the three steps in the safety alert. Doing nothing is not advisable.